1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

whistling and blowing over it for about 5 or 10 minutes. Should he suffer a relapse and undergo another treatment the sukya will demand another fee.

RELIGION: SUPREME BEING, TRIBAL HEROES, SPIRITS, CREATION OF MAN, DELUGE, CHRISTIANIZATION

SUPREME BEING.—The religious system of these tribes has been fast disintegrating for the last generation. Nowadays both tribes believe in the existence of a Supreme Deity, which the Miskito call *Wan-Aisa*, "Our Father," and the Sumu *Ma-Papak* or *Ma-Papañki*, "Our Father" or "Sun-Father." Both tribes also make use of the name *Dawan*, "Master" or "Lord." This conception has probably been borrowed from Christianity; still Exquemelin (Engl. ed.: 251) states that in his days (1671) the Miskito believed in one God. This Deity, which dwells in heaven, is sometimes confused with the various tribal heroes. According to these Indians, God has created the world and the inhabitants, but He does not appear to worry a great deal about the individual being, nor is He able to ward off the various dangers which continually menace mankind; consequently He is not honored with offerings, prayers, worship, or sacrifice. Furthermore, He lives so far away from earth that it is impossible to enter into relations with Him, and He can not be approached by man.

MINOR GODS AND TRIBAL HEROES.—Both the Miskito and the Sumu believe in the existence of a number of supernatural beings, living formerly on earth like man. These are the sun (M.: *yu, lapta;* S.: *ma*), thunder (M.: *alwani;* S.: *alwana*), moon (M.: *kati;* S.: *wiko*), rainbow (M.: *kumadora;* S.: *wayauli, wayuli*), stars and planets (M.: *slilma;* T., P.: *yala;* U.: *ma-baku* "small sun"), the Pleiades (M.: *pupu-wihta;* S.: *kalpas*). According to a Sumu myth a bright planet, called by the Miskito *kati-maya*, "the moon's wife," which is seen just above the new moon, was originally a girl, who was raised by her finger tips by *Udo*, the moon god (Heath, c: 77). These various heavenly bodies are supposed by the Sumu to travel in canoes, a belief which is also held by the Cuna of Panama.[86]

Some of these supernatural beings are in charge of the elements and are responsible for the great calamities which appear occasionally. The god of the wind and of the air, called by the Miskito *Prahaku* or *Aubiya*,[87] sends the hurricanes and the great inundations which destroy the plantations and kill the livestock. His representative is

[86] Erland Nordenskiöld, Les Rapports entre l'Art, la Religion, et la Magie chez les Cuna et les Choco. Journal de la Société des Americanistes de Paris, tome XII, Paris, 1929, p. 150.

[87] Cf. "obi" or "obeah," a species of sorcery practiced among West Indian Negroes.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

the rainbow, which the Panamaka Sumu sometimes call *walasa aniwa*, "the devil is vexed." At its appearance the Indians hide their children in the huts so that they may not see it nor point at it; by the latter act the outstretched arm or hand is supposed to become crippled and covered with terrible sores.

Thunder (M.: *alwani;* S.: *alwana*) is sometimes confounded with God among the heathen Miskito and Sumu. According to some, he created the world and governs it by appointing the seasons; others say that he lived formerly on earth and was the first man. When he thunders, it is to warn man that a flood is coming. From an Ulwa Indian, originally from the headwaters of Rio Grande, I obtained the following story, which I propose naming—

The Origin of the Kiawa Rocks

God (*Ma-Papaŭki*) sent Thunder (*Alwana*) as his representative to the earth to instruct the people in agriculture and in other arts and crafts. One day while Alwana was absent from home an evil spirit, named Kiawa, came and carried off his wife.

A parrot (*warâwa*) informed Thunder of this fact while the latter was planting pine trees on a big rock at a place called to this day *Alwana kuma-ka rumpaŭ* (in Miskito, *Alwani ŭi-eal-ka lulkan*). This locality is on Rio Quiguasca, the upper course of Rio Grande; pine-covered rocks and low hills extend there to the very edge of the river.

Upon hearing what had happened, Thunder left his work in order to wrest his wife from Kiawa. He found the latter at his home on Rio Iya, a tributary of Rio Tuma. Kiawa was drunk at the time, but he was a powerful giant, and Thunder was unable to master him at first.

When the fight began Kiawa turned into a boa constrictor (*wyail*) and swallowed his own wife, in order to prevent her from falling into the hands of Thunder. The two enemies then vied with each other in growing tall, in order to reach the clouds. Each in turn outgrew the other, until finally Thunder's head overtopped the clouds, which enabled him to press his enemy to the ground. With his long machete (*masel*) he then cut Kiawa in pieces, thereby restoring to life all the people who had been swallowed by the giant. The various parts of the latter turned into rocks which are visible on the upper Rio Iya, and are still known by the name Kiawa. The Indians claim that sometimes these rocks bleed, and that certain parts of the giant, as his head and navel, may still be distinctly seen.[70]

Spirits.—More powerful than God or the various tribal heroes are the numerous evil spirits (M.: *ulasa, lasa;*[71] T., P.: *walasa;* U.:

[70] Heath (b: 419) gives a slightly different version of this story.

[71] Dampier (I, 9) already states that the devil is called *Wallassaw* by the Miskito.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

length the wand will reveal the truth; if not the string must be altered and the process repeated until it is in its right position. Questions relating to the present and future will then be answered by the sukya, correctly as he states, though I must confess that the queries I propounded were never replied to very successfully, but I was an unbeliever, and it is a notorious fact that spirits are put out of their calculations by the incredulous."

CONTROL OF RAIN AND WIND.—Rain and wind can, according to the Indians, be produced or stopped at will by human, animal, or spirit agency. Thus while paddling down Rio Plátano with a Miskito crew, I noticed clouds gathering windward and threatening rain. The captain of the boat, upon noticing them, motioned the rain with the right hand to pass on, with the following words: "Do not come here as we do not want to get wet now! We have no shirt nor trousers with us to change, and if you will wet us we will have to remain in the moist clothes the whole day long and suffer from the cold. Pass on to those indolent and good-for-nothing people on Rio Patuca; they are all at home now lying in their hammocks."

Bell (b: 157) relates a similar experience with the Miskito of Rio Prinsapolca: The Indians, hearing the rain coming by the noise in the distant bush, vainly tried to keep it off by blowing with their mouths and driving the breath away on either side of their faces. They also spoke to the rain, telling it of the uselessness of its coming to wet them, thus: "Pass on, pass on; we are all wet already. You need not come here; pass on to the head of the river. There is gunpowder and tinder lying uncovered on the rocks. A man is burning a plantation there; pass on quickly, lest another shower wet it before you."

Often when the Indians heard a shower coming they pushed their canoe quietly under the thick bush to hide until the rain had passed, and were much annoyed if any one talked or made any noise. The killing of a howling monkey was also believed to bring rain, as that animal belongs to the water spirit, who will be angry at such an act (Bell, b: 157).

While proceeding up Rio Coco from the port Cabo Gracias a Dios to the Miskito settlement of the same name, my two paddlers put up a small sail, and then kept on whistling in order to call the wind to help them in their work. When all their efforts were of no avail they became rather vexed and made some disobliging remarks about the "lazy wind" (*pasa sriñwankira*).

ECLIPSES.—An eclipse of the moon is said by the Sumu to be caused by the jaguar devouring that heavenly body; their name in itself points to this belief (*wdiko nawa kasice, wdiko nawa kasya;* lit.: "the jaguar is eating the moon"). At a lunar eclipse, no matter at what time of the night it occurs, the Sumu get up immediately in order

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

to frighten that feline and drive it away, by shooting arrows at it, making great fires, and beating drums. The same belief is held by these Indians with regard to a solar eclipse (T., P.: *ma nawa kawa;* U.: *ma nawa kasya* "the jaguar is eating the sun").[9]

The Miskito, however, do not share in this superstition; they call the lunar eclipse *kati ši-akura aikan* "the moon has caught his mother-in-law," and the solar eclipse *ya ši-akura aikan* "the sun has caught his mother-in-law."[10]

SNAKE CHARMING.—Snake charming is practiced on the Mosquito Coast by Negroes chiefly (native Africans especially), but some of the Miskito are also supposed to know this art. In order to remain invulnerable against the bite of any snake, these people are said to drink from time to time an infusion made by boiling the guaco weed (*Mikania* sp.) in water. The same effect may be obtained by applying a little juice from the latter plant into a small incision in the skin. The chewing of a few guaco leaves every day is also supposed to be an efficacious preventive against snake bites. The best snake charmers are said to eat the head of the reptile after having extracted the poisonous fangs; others merely cook their food with a little fat extracted over a slow fire from the head of a snake. The snake charmer must submit to restrictions in diet during certain periods of the year; he must also abstain from sexual intercourse with other women but his own, lest he might lose his powers.

In order to capture a poisonous snake without any danger to himself, the snake charmer chews a little bark from a certain shrub (M.: *pyuta sikiku*) and then spits upon the head of the reptile. The latter is immediately stupefied and becomes absolutely harmless.

Many people are supposed to keep tame snakes in their houses or fields in order to guard their property. These reptiles act as watchdogs and will bite any intruder. The more ignorant Ladinos, who call such a snake "sontin" (from the English word "something," it appears), believe that this habit is practiced by almost all the Indians and Negroes of the Mosquito Coast.

CAMOTILLO POISON.—This is supposed to be a deadly poison with the aid of which the intended victim will die at a specified date, if everything has been prepared the right way. Even if the victim should know that camotillo has been administered to him he can not escape from a lingering death, for science knows of no way to counteract its effects.

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[9] The Cuna Indians of Panama believe that eclipses of the sun or of the moon are caused by a demon—half dog, half woman—which starts eating those heavenly bodies; these Indians drive the demon away by shooting at it with miniature arrows (R. Nordenskiöld, Comparative Ethnographical Studies, vol. F, pt. 2, Göteborg, 1930, p. 26).

[10] Sun and moon are considered masculine in the Miskito language.

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

is an elaboration of aboriginal customs, encouraged by the English. Early records indicate that the *Sumo*, *Paya*, and *Jicaque* developed similar but perhaps less complicated organizations in order to resist the Spanish Conquest. Probably they too had waged war previous to the 16th century, but available data do not permit identification of aboriginal customs.

Among the *Mosquito* and *Sumo* all men were potential warriors. They were arranged according to military ranks, which were distinguished by feather insignia. The warriors, particularly of the *Sumo*, were subject to severe tests including dietary restrictions, and they celebrated various ceremonies. Women were not permitted to attend these ceremonies, and the warriors were not supposed to have any relations with women. Before a battle shamans were consulted. The warriors, painted black, usually attacked the enemy at night. The *Mosquito* took prisoners to be sold as slaves to the Whites. The *Sumo* killed as many of the enemy as possible. They mutilated the corpses and wore the teeth and fingernails as trophies. Some of the *Sumo* reputedly ate the roasted flesh of their enemies in order to inflict further insult upon them and to make sure that they were completely destroyed.

ESTHETIC AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Dances and music.—All ceremonies are the time for much intoxication, dancing, and singing. On frequent occasions the *Mosquito* sing in groups or singly. There are many kinds of dances, some of them specially for women and others for particular ceremonies. There are two types of drums: a goblet-shaped drum used in funeral and memorial ceremonies and a drum of European origin which is used in some of the ceremonies and, perhaps, as a signal drum. Conch-shell trumpets and reed or bone flutes with one to four stops are blown. *Sumo* and *Mosquito* shamans use flutes 6 feet (2 m.) long. The musical bow, with or without a gourd sounding box, is played by women. Gourd rattles are also used.

RELIGION

The *Sumo*, *Mosquito*, and *Paya* believe in a deity, called "Our Father," who lives in the sky. He is little interested in mankind, is too far removed to be approached by humans, and has little influence upon human affairs. The sun, moon, and stars, especially the Pleiades, are considered to be supernatural beings. They figure in the mythology and are of some significance in the religious philosophy. Solar and lunar eclipses, thunder, wind, the rainbow, and other celestial phenomena are explained by myths. The last three are the agents of the major deities.

A *Sumo* creation myth recounts the activities of two brothers who made the animals out of maize cobs. People are believed to have been made from rays of the sun. The *Paya* believe that their god sowed men in the